

## Impact Case Study Template

<b>Section A</b>		
<b>Institution:</b> The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film, and Screen Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Influencing cultural understanding and practices in the programming, exhibition, and production of films from Spain and Latin America		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 1 January 2011–30 December 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Maria M. Delgado	Professor of Theatre and Screen Arts	2015–present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2015–2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>Section B</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Delgado's influential collaborations with filmmakers, distributors, film programmers, and festivals have led to wide-ranging and intersecting impacts. Her research on Spanish and Latin American cinema and performance has led to impact in the following ways: (i) generating new ways of thinking that have influenced creative and industry practices in film programming and distribution; (ii) enhancing cultural understanding relating to artistic production from Spain and Latin America; (iii) contributing to the production of new cultural artefacts in Spain and Argentina.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Since arriving at Central (1 October 2015), Delgado has built on a body of work, commenced at Queen Mary University of London (2001–2015) (RO1), relating to issues of trans-cultural representation in Spanish- and Catalan-language screen and stage cultures. Exploring Spain's position within broader cultural histories of conflict and exile, Delgado has expanded her studies of actresses María Casares and Margarita Xirgu into a Spanish-language publication that has reached a new non-Anglophone readership (RO4: 183–252, 63–134). Analysing the output of Spanish actors, directors, and companies, and their transnational circulation through festival and touring networks (RO4), she has extended understandings of Spain's position as a marginalised 'other' on the fringes of Europe and of the complex, diasporic formation of Hispanic culture in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.</p> <p>Questions of transnational cultural representation have led Delgado to develop a new strand of research since 2015, exploring cultural discourses integral to histories of dictatorship, forced disappearances, and transnational justice in Spain (1939–1975) and Argentina (1976–1983). Whether considering Almodóvar's 2013 film <i>I'm So Excited!</i> as a comment on the failing of Spain's democracy (RO2) or the institutionalisation of memory in Argentina enunciated in the 2009 Oscar-winning political thriller <i>The Secret in Their Eyes</i> (RO3: 251–55), this research consistently articulates the role culture can play in dialogue with political and legal institutions in societies emerging from authoritarian regimes, by disseminating and facilitating demands for justice and ensuring they are met. By focusing both on arts practices 'imagined, performed, and enacted at the intersection of memory, fiction, and politics' (RO3: 262) and on the narrative control and problematic rhetoric that underpins the construction of 'official' histories in Spain and Argentina (RO3: 245), these approaches have proved key to her Co-Investigator role on the AHRC-funded project 'Staging Difficult Pasts' (RG1). The deployment of a methodology of active collaboration with filmmakers, curators, and directors — progressed in <i>A Companion to Latin American Cinema</i>, 'Disappearing Acts', and her work with Argentine theatre- and filmmaker Lola Arias (RO3, RO5, RO6) — has enabled the research to be driven by ethnographic observations of rehearsals or film shoots, and explorations of creative processes with the artists concerned. Delgado's research takes a culturally interpretative and politically committed approach to understandings of process and product — an approach that permeates all aspects</p>		

of its dissemination, from public masterclasses and other audience engagement activities to journalistic and scholarly publications.

### 3. References to the research (\*Indicates output was peer reviewed)

**RO1. \*Delgado, M.** and R. Fiddian (eds). 2013. *Spanish cinema 1973–2010: Auteurism, politics, landscape and memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press). Submitted in REF2014.

**RO2. \*Delgado, M.** 2016. 'Los amantes pasajeros/I'm So Excited! (2013): "performing" la crisis', in *Performance and Spanish film*, ed. by D. Allbritton, A. Melero and T. Whittaker (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 252–268.

**RO3. Delgado, M., S. M. Hart and R. Johnson** (eds). 2017. *A Companion to Latin American Cinema* (Oxford: Blackwell-Wiley). Submitted in REF2021.

**RO4. \*Delgado, M.** 2017. «Otro» teatro español: Supresión e inscripción en la escena española de los siglos XX y XXI (Iberoamericana/Vervuert, Madrid and Frankfurt). Submitted in REF2021.

**RO5. \*Delgado, M.** 2018. 'Disappearing Acts: On Analysing Creative Practice in Spain', *Hispanic Research Journal*, 19 (2): 196–213. DOI: [10.1080/14682737.2018.1444428](https://doi.org/10.1080/14682737.2018.1444428)

**RO6. Delgado, M.** 2020. 'Ways of remembering Las Malvinas/The Falklands', in *Lola Arias: Re-enacting Life*, ed. by Jean Graham-Jones (Aberystwyth: Performance Research Books), pp. 294–301.

**RG1. \*Delgado, M.** (Co-Investigator). AHRC Standard Grant, 'Staging Difficult Pasts: Of Narratives, Objects and Public Memory', 2018–21. Total budget: £495,735. Grant reference: AH/R006849/1. Project team includes PI Bryce Lease (RHUL), CI Michal Kobialka (Minnesota), PDRA Cecilia Sosa (RHUL).

**RG2. Delgado, M.** Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Impact funding, ESMA Memory Museum, Buenos Aires, 2020. £7869.76.

### 4. Details of the impact

Conceived, developed, and shared with her collaborators in the cultural sector, Delgado's research builds impact generation directly into its methodology. Her active collaboration with leading figures and organisations in international film production, distribution, and reception has led to the following sets of interlinked impacts on professional practices, cultural understanding, and the creation of new cultural artefacts.

#### 1. Generating new ways of thinking about creative practice that have enabled film programmers, distributors, and artists to reach UK audiences

Delgado's research-led collaborations with film programmers have influenced their professional practices, developing new UK audiences for Spanish-, Basque-, Galician-, and Catalan-language features and documentaries often marginalised in a cultural sector dominated by Anglophone outputs. Her work with industry professionals on the exhibition and reception of new Spanish and Latin American cinema has been particularly influential through her role as a programming advisor for the UK's biggest film festival of its kind, the BFI London Film Festival (LFF), and her consultation by the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), the London Spanish Film Festival, and UK-based film distributors Network Distributing, New Wave, and Second Run. The Director of the LFF, Tricia Tuttle, attests to Delgado's research input as 'an integral part' of the LFF programming team, programming '94 films from Spain and Latin America [between 2015–2020] that attracted audiences of over 38,000' (S2). Tuttle identifies Carla Simón's *Summer 1993* and Lila Avilés' *The Chambermaid*, which secured successful UK distribution post-LFF screenings, partly as a consequence of Delgado's 'advocacy and research [which] has been so valuable in a market that routinely overlooks female filmmakers' (S2). 'Spurred by her [Delgado's] enthusiasm, knowledge and insights' about *The Chambermaid*, Robert Beeson, Managing Director of New Wave Films, specialising in releasing foreign-language arthouse titles in the UK and Ireland, 'watched it and decided to release it. [...] It went on to be our most successful film of 2019' (S8). In all, 34% of the films Delgado has programmed have been picked up for distribution in the UK or on streaming platforms, 'despite' as Tuttle observes, 'a very difficult UK market for independent and foreign language work' (S2).

Joana Granero, Director of the London Spanish Film Festival, recognises that she has consistently sought Delgado's programming advice with 106 films presented between Autumn

2015 and December 2020, further inviting her to host 8 public interviews for the Festival since Autumn 2015 (S10). She testifies to the impact of Delgado's research in her own programming vision: 'providing audiences with access to work that might not otherwise be seen in the UK and enhancing through her on stage interviews their engagement with that work' (S10). Furthermore, she identifies Delgado's article 'Disappearing Acts' as 'particularly influential in this respect, demonstrating the ways in which she engages creative artists in discussions about their work, articulating a poetics of that which is often invisible in the final product. It is indeed this focus that so marks her recent research and proves so relevant to those of us curating public events around the exhibition of a film in a cultural context different to that in which the film was produced' (S10).

At the ICA, both a cinema venue and distributor, Delgado has co-programmed over 25 films since 2016 (reaching audiences of approximately 3,000), given advisory input for the annual Frames of Representation Festival (2017–2020), and initiated 'Latin America Monthly' (LAM) in 2017. Nico Marzano, the ICA's Head of Cinema, confirms her influence on his programming practice: 'Delgado's thorough knowledge has also majorly informed my own curatorial practice. [...] Her research in *A Companion to Latin American Cinema* — shared in development with me — and "Disappearing Acts" have provided indispensable methodological approaches to the creative process of making films (with a particular focus on work with actors) in Latin America and Spain that have led to the invitations I have made to her to collaborate with us here at the ICA' (S3). Moreover, he testifies to the role of LAM in bringing 'contemporary and often in the UK unknown' films to London audiences, particularly noting Delgado's role in the success of 'Alison McAlpine's *Cielo* (2018) and Michelle Memran's *The Rest I Make Up* (2018) — two important, critically acclaimed documentaries that would have remained unseen to the audience without Delgado's suggestions to give them a run in the ICA cinemas' (S3).

Sebastian Lelio, Chile's first Oscar Winner for Best Foreign-language feature for *A Fantastic Woman* (2017), describes Delgado as 'a very relevant figure for those of us who make cinema from Latin America'; her 'contribution to the dissemination of new filmmakers is very concrete and very powerful' (S4). Lelio cites Delgado's film journalism, her selection of his films for LFF, and a career interview for a 2018 BFI retrospective as significant means through which she has increased his presence in Anglophone markets: 'I have been fortunate in that Maria has followed my career through various films and has always disseminated them in various spheres [...], always with a sharp and consistent gaze, always generous, informed, incisive' (S4).

Overall, the reach of Delgado's impact with programmers and filmmakers is demonstrated in audiences of 47,852 for her programming activities, generating GBP470,724 in ticket sales (S2, S3, S10).

## **2. Enhancing cultural understanding relating to cinema from Spain and Latin America**

Through disseminating her research — including sharing her research in progress with over 30 distributors, cinemas, programmers, producers — Delgado has had significant impact in enhancing cultural understanding of Spanish- and Catalan-language artistic production. Tim Beddows, Managing Director of Network Distributing Ltd, a UK-based independent film and home entertainment distributor, considers Delgado 'pivotal in our promotional efforts to bring Latin American cinema to the UK, from acquisition to distribution, via Q&As, talks, events and much more' (S7). He stresses especially her input into the releases of Pablo Larraín's *The Club* and *Neruda* in 2016 and 2017, including contributions for BBC News and interviews for the DVDs of both features, as a means of enriching audience engagement with the films: 'We've found her knowledge indispensable and she is essential for engaging with both talent and audiences' (S7). Likewise, for Mehelli Modi, the founder and Managing Director of Second Run, UK distributors of international independent cinema: 'Delgado has always been at the top of my list for someone to host conversations with the filmmakers at those premieres or special screenings because her research is so effective in enabling cultural understandings of their work, rooted in their particular cultural contexts and creative processes' (S11). Delgado's activities in this area include: introducing 11 films and conducting over 60 public Q&As and masterclasses with Iberian and Latin American filmmakers from Mariano Llinás to Pedro Costa, as well as LFF Screen Talks with Lucrecia Martel on the premiere of *Zama* (2017) and Alfonso Cuarón (2018) for *Roma*. Tuttle attests to the ways in which Delgado's contribution shaped understanding of *Roma*, which 'went on to win the Best Film at the British Academy of Television Awards in 2019', the first Spanish-language film to do so 'in more than a decade':

'For the distributor, Netflix, its BFI London Film Festival premiere and the [Delgado's] Screen Talk with Alfonso Cuarón were the vital first events in that very successful Awards' campaign' (S2). Beeson, who bought *Zama* for release in the UK, credits Delgado's 'involvement' in its distribution as enabling New Wave Films 'to do many more things than usual with [director] Lucrecia Martel' — Delgado contributed Q&As, a masterclass, a public interview at the BFI, and an interview for New Wave's DVD release of the film (S8). Beddows concludes 'the overarching effect of her involvement has been to significantly enhance cultural understandings of materials from non-Anglophone languages' (S7).

According to Kieron Corless, the Deputy Editor of *Sight & Sound*, Delgado is the magazine's 'most expert and respected contributor in the field of Spanish-language cinema' (S6), contributing 22 reviews since 1 October 2015. *Sight & Sound*'s features and reviews habitually appear just before a film is released and Corless notes their sway in setting the tone for reception of a film in the UK whilst also increasing public understanding and engagement and, ultimately, audiences (the magazine sells approximately 16,000 print copies and receives 400,000 online views per month) (S6). He goes on to testify that 'Delgado's own contributions are models of lucidity and interpretative acuity that not only help enhance our readers' understanding of the work in question, but will also doubtless form the groundwork for future research' (S6). Delgado's influence in enriching cultural understandings of complex, genre-defying work led to Lola Arias requesting that she undertake the press notes for *Theatre of War*, her debut film's prize-winning premiere at the 2018 Berlin Film Festival. In addition, her specialist features on Almodóvar have served as intermediary transmitters of ongoing research, recognised by Corless as 'a lens into the more political dimension of his recent films' (S6).

This generation of critical context for the cultural understanding of one of the world's leading filmmakers was also crucial to Delgado's role as advisory curator for the BFI's 2016 Almodóvar retrospective, for which she wrote all brochure/website copy and programmed public events, chaired the opening panel, and conducted interviews with actresses Rossy de Palma and Marisa Paredes, and a career interview with Almodóvar (subsequently viewed online by 9,239 people). The retrospective was seen by 14,176 people at the BFI and subsequently at HOME Manchester. Delgado's contribution, which included media appearances promoting the season on BBC's *Woman's Hour* and *The Robert Elms Show*, was described as 'indispensable' by the BFI's then Director of Cinemas: 'Her dedicated research, intimate knowledge and inspiring approach helped us draw new audiences in to see Almodóvar's wonderful films and to learn more about them. [...] This was [...] one of the highlights of the year for the BFI' (S2). In the aftermath of the retrospective, Almodóvar himself acknowledged the significance of his collaboration with Delgado: 'Maria Delgado is the best bridge I have been able to find to explain, deepen, and transmit my films in a culture as different from ours as the Anglo-Saxon one. The understanding of everything I have done as a director and writer, of the social and cultural environment of where I come from and of the general context of references that make up my work find in Maria not only the best translation but the greatest complicity' (S5).

### **3. Contributing to the production of new cultural artefacts in Spain and Argentina**

The impact of Delgado's work in terms of enhancing cultural understanding relating to Spanish-language cultural production is extended through the contribution her research has made to the production of new cultural artefacts. Her research on the Spanish actress María Casares (RO4) led to an invitation to contribute to a new TVE2 (Spanish National Television) documentary on Casares, *El todo o la nada*. The film's director, Elisabeth Anglarill, acknowledges Delgado's formative influence on its conception and structure: 'the chapter dedicated to María Casares in her book *"Otro" teatro español* was of great help. Indeed, the documentary's narrative is built around two voices: that of Casares' biographer in Spain, who compiles details from her personal history, and that of Maria Delgado, who explores her complete artistic trajectory' (S1). Produced as part of TVE2's award-winning *Imprescindibles* series and broadcast on 29 December 2019, achieving a 1.7% share of viewing figures (271,000 viewers) on first transmission, the documentary remains available on the RTVE website, where it has been viewed 13,593 times by 9,428 unique users (S1).

Delgado's collaboration, as part of the 'Staging Difficult Pasts' (RG1, RG2) project, with Buenos Aires ESMA Memory Museum (the site of a clandestine centre of detention and torture during the 1976–1983 military dictatorship) has led to dramaturgical input into a new film

produced by El Pampero Cine. Invited by ESMA's Museum Director, Alejandra Naftal, to curate one of the Museum's monthly 5 o'clock visits — exploring new ways of thinking about the museum's collection for visitors — Delgado and Sosa (Staging Difficult Past PDRA) brought into artistic dialogue testimonies from a Spanish verbatim play based on the 2012 trial of Judge Baltasar Garzón (for investigating forced disappearances during the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath) and those from Argentine blood relatives of disappeared persons in ESMA's archive of the trials. Delgado and Sosa's collaborative dramaturgy and curation of the testimony, working with Argentine film director Alejo Moguillansky (whose work is analysed in Delgado and Sosa's co-authored essay in RO3, pp. 238–69), resulted in a 20-minute film which now forms part of the Museum's collection (S9i). Bringing together stakeholders in Human Rights discourse to debate transnational justice in Spain and Argentina (including Argentine Federal Judge, Daniel Rafecas and founder of Spain's Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory, Emilio Silva Barrera), the event was attended by more than 500 people. It attracted press coverage in 5 outlets (S9i), including leading newspaper *Página 12*, with participants observing that the co-produced film generated enhanced understanding of how cultural heritage can be interpreted (S9i, S9ii). *Perfils* feature highlighted the decisive role of art in facilitating a transcultural conversation, 'reviewing that which happens in the politics of a neighbouring country to perceive the importance of [ESMA's] message' (S9iii). The Director of Argentina's National Archive of Memory, Mariana Tello, confirms the impact of Delgado and Sosa's intervention which 'transform[ed] the testimonies, from so many documents into performances embodied by actors different to the witnesses, unleash[ing] a new potentiality. It was very transformative; bringing together worlds that appear separated by spatial and temporal distance' (9ii), such that the testimonies 'no longer seem to be something pertaining to the [specific] victim but something that belongs to all of us' (S9i).

In summary, the significance and the reach of the impact from Delgado's research on representativity — whether it is the processes and practices of practitioners or the countering of dominant narratives — is attested to by the Spanish Ministry of Culture's award of the Cross of Alfonso X the Wise presented to Delgado in 2017 for her contribution to Spanish-language culture and by the 2018 Ramon Llull Foundation's Award for International Promotion of Catalan Creation for 'wide-ranging efforts to bolster not only leading figures but also emerging Catalan theatre and film artists' (S12).

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

**S1.** Testimonial from Elisabeth Anglarill, director of TVE2's documentary, *El todo o la nada*, undated

**S2.** Testimonial from Tricia Tuttle, Director, BFI London Film Festival, 25 January 2021

**S3.** Testimonial from Nico Marzano, Head of Cinema, ICA, 23 December 2020

**S4.** Testimonial from Sebastián Lelio, director of *A Fantastic Woman* (2017), 18 February 2020

**S5.** Citation by filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar, written for Maria Delgado's receipt of the Cross of Alfonso X the Wise (2017)

**S6.** Testimonial from Kieron Corless, Deputy Editor, *Sight & Sound*, 20 December 2020

**S7.** Testimonial from Tim Beddows, Managing Director, Network Distributing Limited, 16 February 2021

**S8.** Testimonial from Robert Beeson, Managing Director, New Wave Films, 16 February 2021

**S9.** (9i) 'The Disappeared from Spain and Argentina: Virtual Visit at the ESMA Memory Museum in Buenos Aires' <https://stagingdifficultpasts.org/esma-virtual-visit.html> [accessed 17 March 2021], includes articles: (9ii) Cecilia Sosa, 'Derechos humanos en tiempos de pandemia: testimonios que se transforman en performances', *Página 12*, 18 October 2020; (9iii) Pablo Helman 'Arte para entender el horror en tiempos peligrosos', *Perfil*, 1 August 2020

**S10.** Testimonial from Joana Granero, Director of the London Spanish Film Festival, 31 January 2021

**S11.** Testimonial from Mehelli Modi, Managing Director, Second Run Ltd, 14 January 2021

**S12.** Citation for Ramon Llull Foundation Award for International Promotion of Catalan Creation, 23 November 2018

[https://www.llull.cat/english/actualitat/actualitat\\_prensa\\_detall.cfm?id=36421&url=la-fundacion-ramon-llull-premia-academica-maria-delgado-traductor-artur-guerra-y-linguista-christer-lauren.htm](https://www.llull.cat/english/actualitat/actualitat_prensa_detall.cfm?id=36421&url=la-fundacion-ramon-llull-premia-academica-maria-delgado-traductor-artur-guerra-y-linguista-christer-lauren.htm) [accessed 17 March 2021]